

Saint Mary's College of California

## Saint Mary's Digital Commons

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Sustainability Report

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12-2020

### 7th Annual Sustainability Report

Saint Mary's College of California

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# 7TH ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



**SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE**

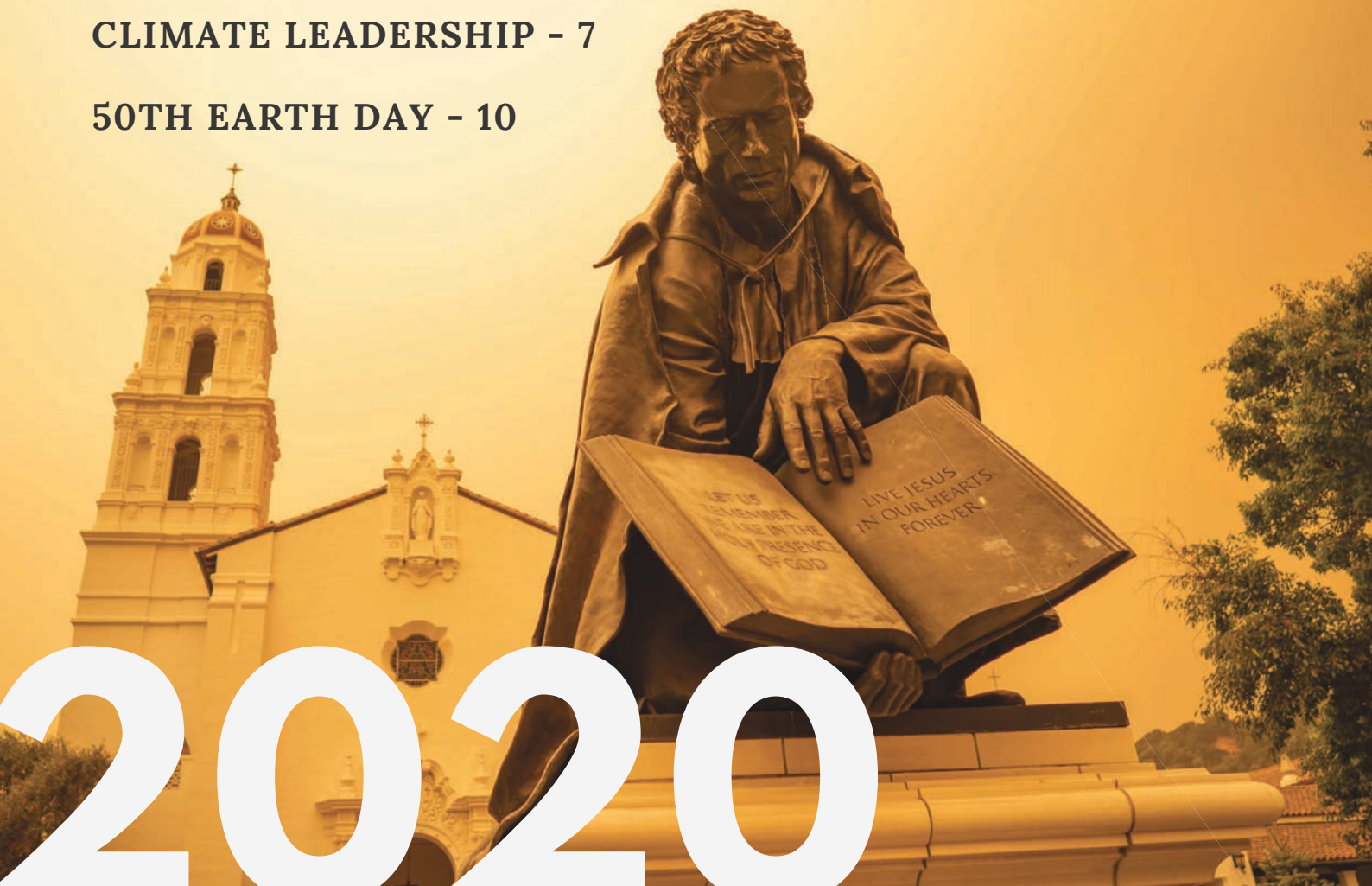
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[WWW.STMARYS-CA.EDU/SUSTAINABILITY](http://WWW.STMARYS-CA.EDU/SUSTAINABILITY)

# WHERE WE ARE NOW

## AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This year Saint Mary's celebrated several sustainability milestones: we launched our inaugural Climate Action Plan, announced our improved STARS rating and signed the President's Climate Commitment. However, we did so against the backdrop of wrenching daily news, and with great humility knowing there is much work that needs to be done.

Sustainability is, simply, the ability to exist continually, and if we care to imagine a better world, to thrive. Every being requires a basic set of conditions to sustain oneself. When these basic conditions—or existence itself—are abused or taken away, communities are rendered unsustainable. The ongoing sixth mass extinction is one glaring example, but yet another that stirred our collective consciousness this year were examples within our own human communities.

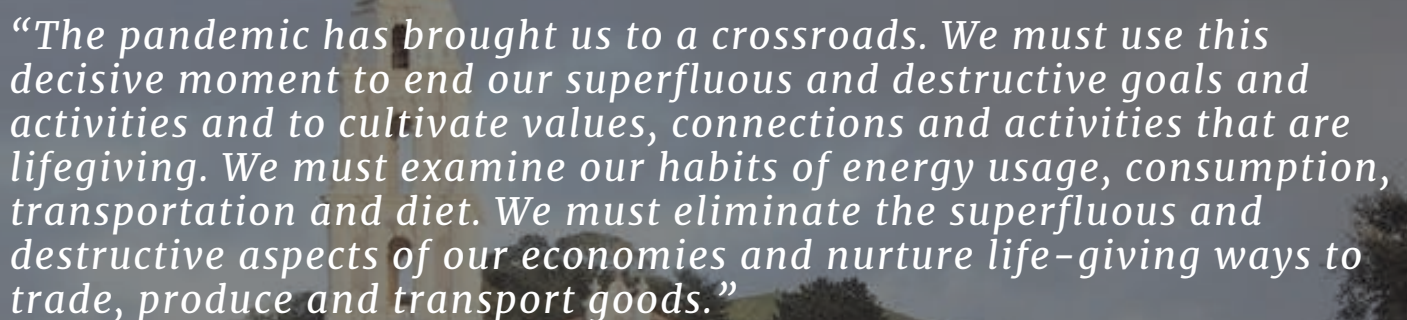
This May marked the 5th Anniversary of *Laudato Si*, the Pope's Encyclical letter on the Care for Our Common Home. The core of the Encyclical was the call to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Cardinal Turkson, who helped pen *Laudato Si*, reflected on 2020 and in particular on the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and so many others who have lost their lives to violence and racism. He described George Floyd's murder as "a cry." A cry to recognize that not all human beings are able to live "successfully and happily", particularly black and brown communities.

While they may not make headline news, illnesses and deaths related to systematic anti-black racism occur every day, and many are environmental in nature: African Americans are disproportionately prone to asthma and respiratory problems due to chronic air pollution in their communities, making them more vulnerable to poor air quality like we experienced this year - the worst fire season in California on record; race is also the biggest indicator of whether one lives near a waste dump, and are consequently exposed to the toxic brew of chemicals these sites emit; and now, African Americans are disproportionately dying from COVID-19.

We humbly acknowledge that our sustainability programs are still at the beginning stages of intentionally embedding and intertwining the values of diversity, equity and justice we support and seek. As we continue to make progress on our sustainability goals, let us confirm that environmental justice is racial justice. Let us shine light on and work alongside the most marginalized populations who bear the brunt of environmental hazards in hopes that we can begin to clean the air and heal.

### COVER PHOTO:

August 2020: An apocalyptic orange sky at Saint Mary's and across the Bay Area as wildfire smoke blocked the sun. **Photo credit:** Gerard Serrano, Office of College Communications.



*"The pandemic has brought us to a crossroads. We must use this decisive moment to end our superfluous and destructive goals and activities and to cultivate values, connections and activities that are lifegiving. We must examine our habits of energy usage, consumption, transportation and diet. We must eliminate the superfluous and destructive aspects of our economies and nurture life-giving ways to trade, produce and transport goods."*

- Pope Francis, October 2020

# SAINT MARY'S RECEIVES GOLD STARS RATING



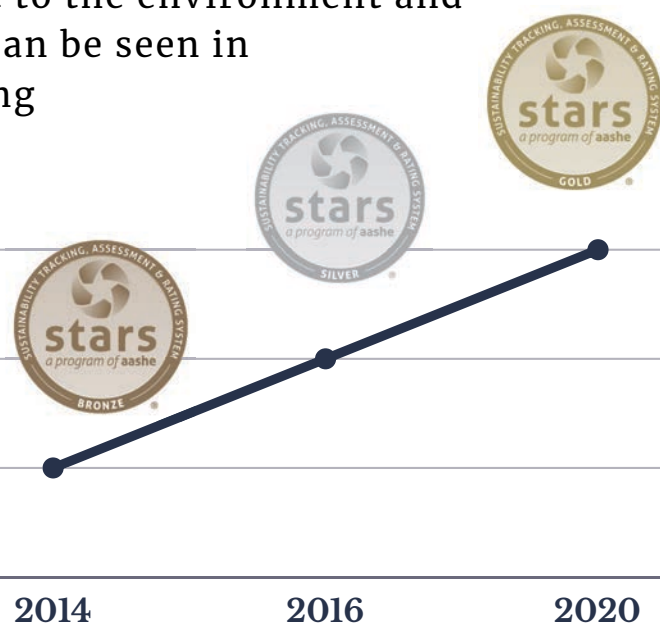
*STARS is an international benchmarking tool used to measure and encourage sustainability in higher education.*

This spring, Saint Mary's College was thrilled to achieve Gold for its performance and achievements in campus sustainability. Designated as a Gold STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) institution by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), the College earned the highly coveted ranking based on factors in five categories: Academics, Engagement, Operations, Planning & Administration, and Innovation & Leadership.

The STARS process is not new to Saint Mary's. The College first participated in STARS in 2014 and achieved a Bronze rating, and in 2016, the College was awarded Silver for its sustainability efforts. Being awarded Gold is a clear indication of the College's dedication, hard work and commitment to sustainability. "Saint Mary's has made significant progress in its commitment to the environment and lowering our carbon footprint, and as can be seen in our new STARS rating, we are continuing to find innovative ways to take that commitment even further," stated President Donahue.

CHECK OUT OUR  
STARS REPORT

[www.stars.aashe.org](http://www.stars.aashe.org)





# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020 STARS REPORT



27%  
reduction in  
water use for  
landscaping  
from 2016



96.9%  
grounds  
managed  
organically



99%  
energy  
sourced from  
renewables



61  
employees  
engaged in  
sustainability  
research



75  
sustainability  
focused  
courses  
offered

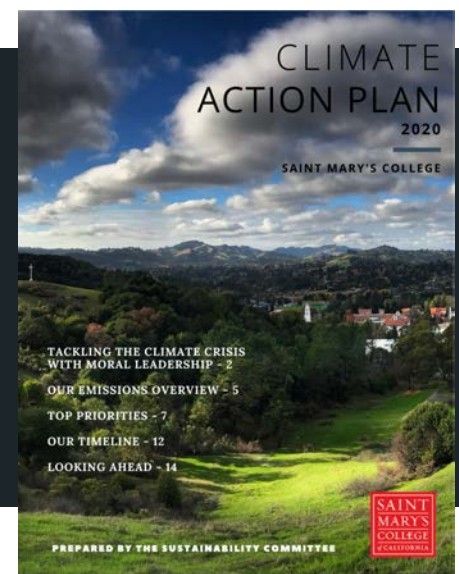


During her 2019 summer research project **Esther Woo '20** in collaboration with **Professor Joel Burley** deployed a temporary PurpleAir monitor on campus while developing plans for a permanent air-quality station. In her last year at Saint Mary's, Woo garnered enough support and funding to purchase and install a permanent monitor on campus. This summer, Woo and Burley with the help of Facilities Services, saw the project to fruition when the monitor was installed and started for the first time on the Joseph Alioto Recreation Center (pictured left).



Woo is currently pursuing a Masters of Science in the School for Environment and Sustainability with a concentration in Environmental Justice and Informatics at the University of Michigan. After taking **Professor Manisha Anantharaman's** Environmental Justice course (JCL 130) and completing an Honors contract on environmental racism, she found her calling. She is pursuing a career which combines her love for science and interest in diversity and inclusion. Through her work, she hopes to engage with community members to equip citizen scientists with knowledge about air pollution and climate change.

# SAINT MARY'S LAUNCHES INAUGURAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

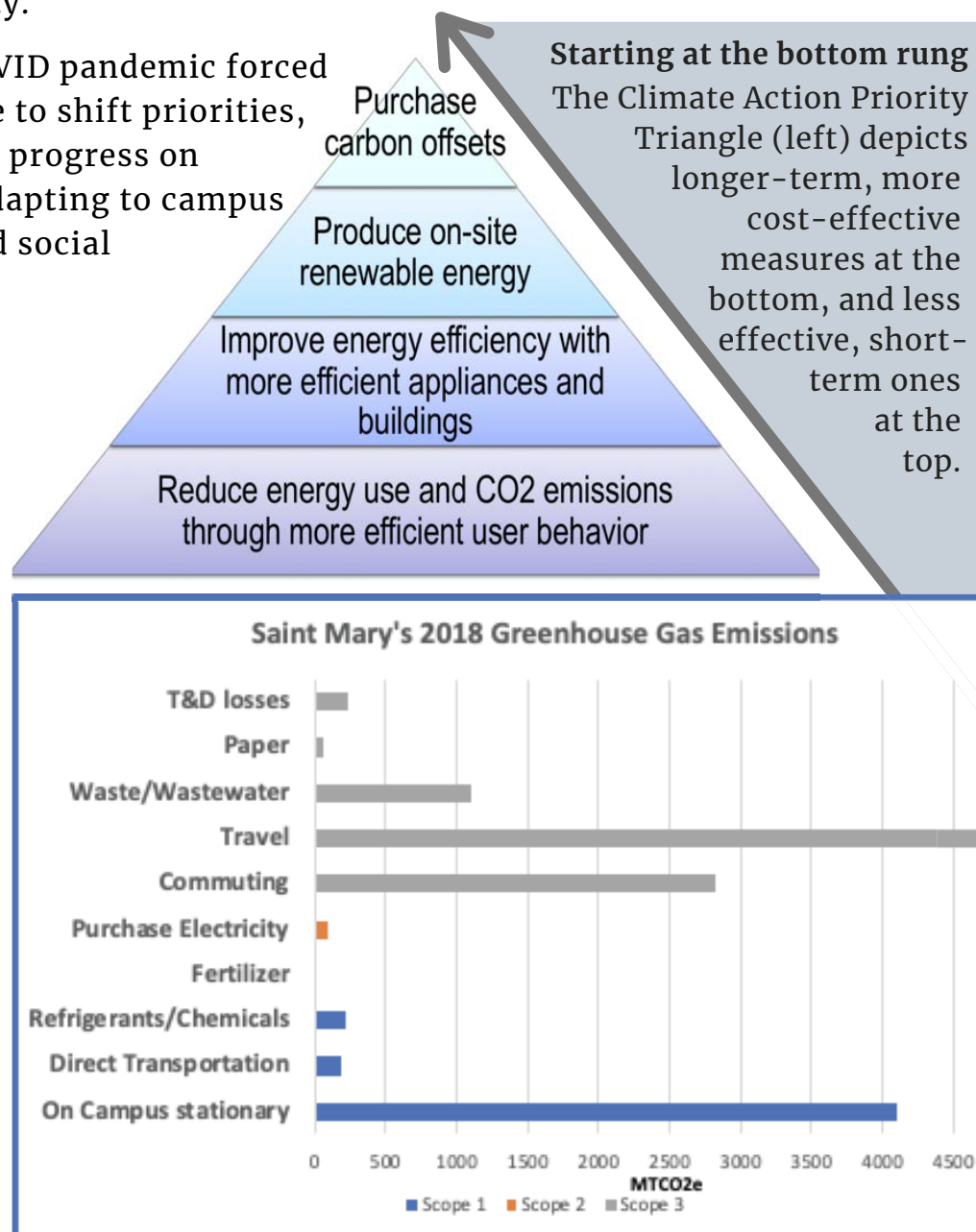


As one of the early signatories of Saint Francis' Pledge, an initiative of the Catholic Climate Covenant, and responding to our Lasallian Catholic Mission to live in and act as a community, Saint Mary's has long been committed to the responsibility of caring for our common home. This year, the College took that commitment a step further in two distinct ways: creating the institution's first Climate Action Plan and joining Second Nature's Climate Leadership Network. Taken together, the two demonstrate the dedication and hard work of the Sustainability Committee and sustainability champions across campus to make climate action a priority.

The circumstances of the COVID pandemic forced the Sustainability Committee to shift priorities, enabling the College to make progress on emissions reduction while adapting to campus closures, online teaching and social distancing.

While the College continues to research on-site renewable energy, another cost-effective and high priority climate action area is to reduce overall energy use, as seen in the Climate Action Priority Triangle.

While many buildings and classrooms were vacant, members of the Facilities and Sustainability teams focused their attention on the second biggest source of emissions: on-campus stationary (90.7% of which comes from the combustion of natural gas for heating and cooling). See more on next page.



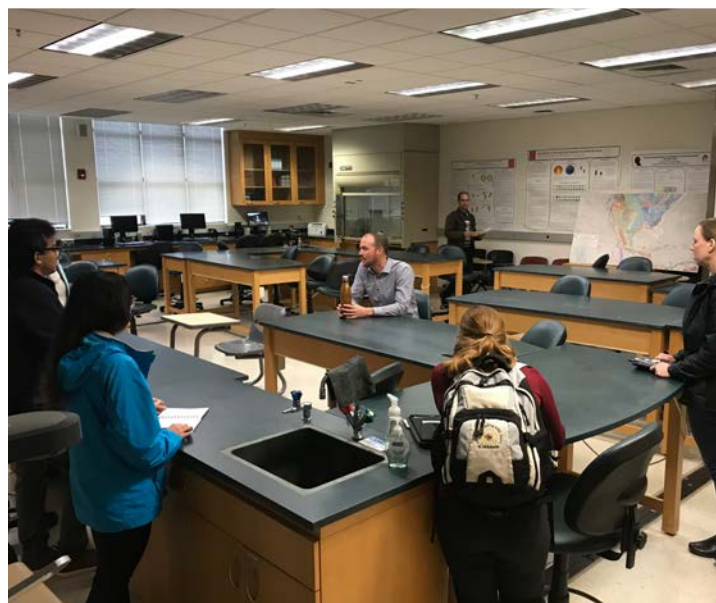


# Strategic Energy Management

## ENERGY SAVINGS, OPPORTUNITIES, INCENTIVES & INAUGURAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY COORDINATOR

In October 2019, Saint Mary's was invited to join the first cohort of Marin Clean Energy's (MCE) Strategic Energy Management (SEM) Program. The SEM program helps participants reduce annual energy usage through the identification and implementation of no- and low-cost savings opportunities using a long-term approach that focuses on setting goals to track progress and report results.

Throughout the past year and a half, Saint Mary's has leveraged SEM to broaden and deepen campus energy efficiency initiatives. Utilizing the program's energy coaches to prioritize energy-saving projects, Saint Mary's is more consistently tracking energy usage, maintaining a rigorous list of energy-saving projects, and engaging staff, faculty and students in energy conservation. Through the SEM program incentives, Saint Mary's was able to create and fully fund a paid graduate student Energy Efficiency Coordinator position to manage several projects that will make a lasting impact.



*Training sessions, energy-saving treasure hunts (pictured right), and energy modeling are provided as part of the support to MCE's Strategic Energy Management program participants.*

# PRESIDENT SIGNS SECOND NATURE CLIMATE LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

## OUR JOURNEY TO THE COMMITMENT

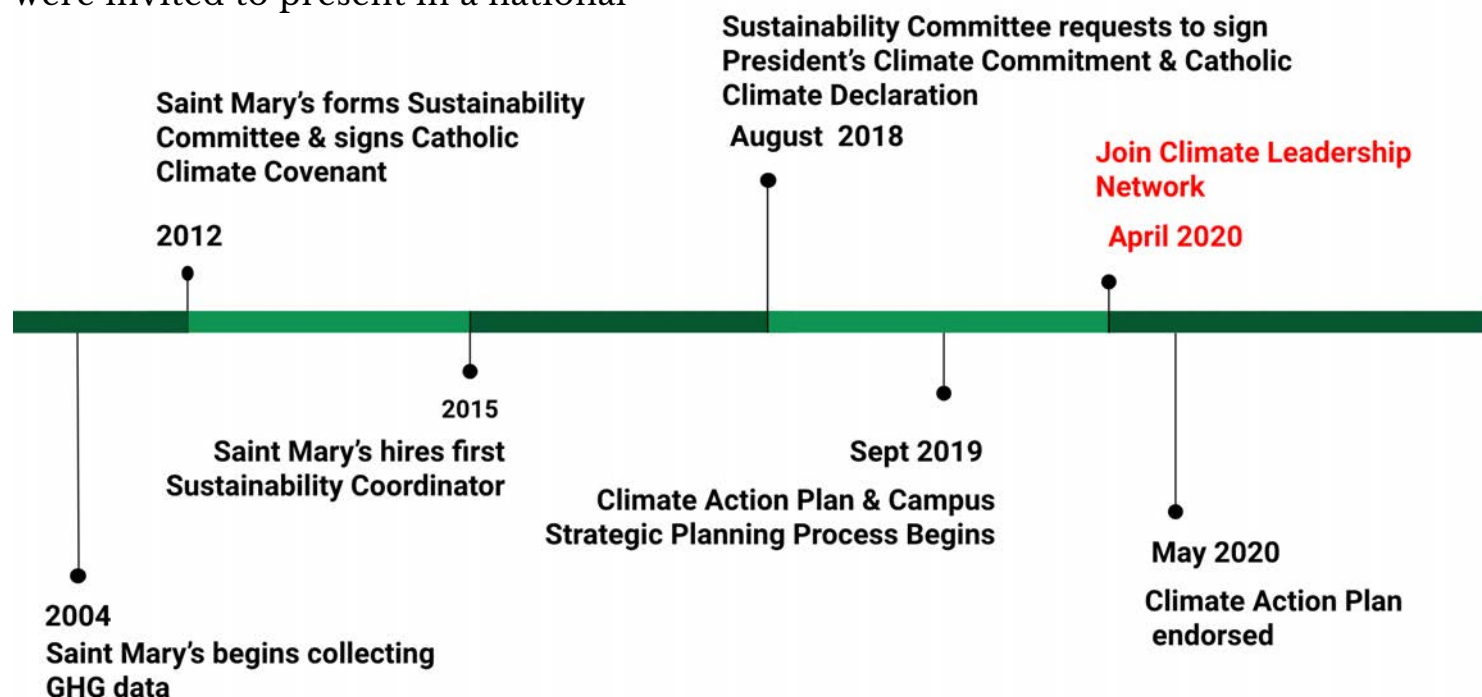


This March, despite the unexpected challenges of being only one month into the COVID pandemic, President Donahue signed Second Nature's Climate Leadership Commitment, joining a network of over 400 higher education institutions across 48 states taking action on climate change. The network and commitment also comes with a wide range of teaching, engagement and management resources.

In December, coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement, Dean Roy Wensley and Sustainability Director Ann Drevno were invited to present in a national



webinar describing why and how the College joined the commitment and the benefits, opportunities, and challenges of our climate action journey. Watch a replay of the webinar: [www.secondnature.org/webinars](http://www.secondnature.org/webinars)





# The Free Store

## ADAPTING TO MEET THE TIMES

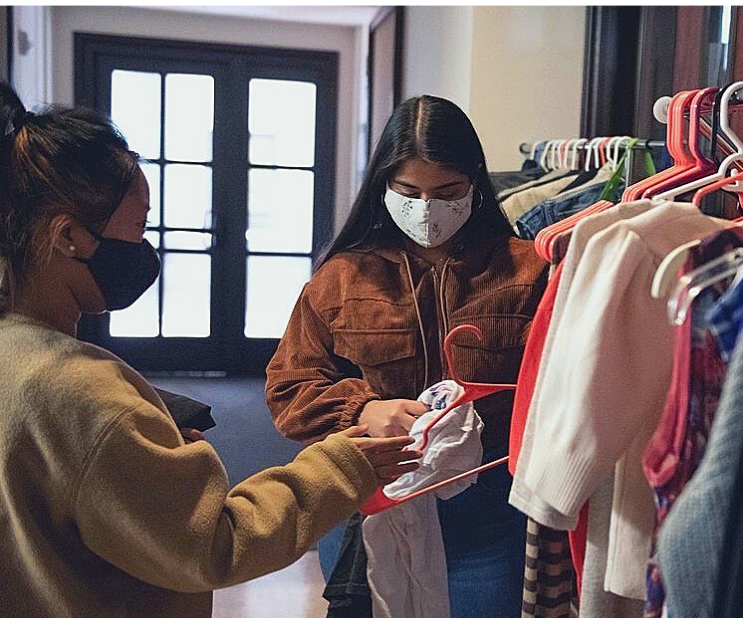


Thanks to the diligence and care of student leaders, Melissa Banuelos '22 and Gabriella Garrido '22, the Free Store reopened this fall after closing its doors in mid-March. The two store managers headed into the new academic year with a mission. "This is an important time to help and serve our community," Banuelos stated in August when asked about plans to reopen the store. Garrido added "I'm all for reopening to offer financial help to students via books, clothes, kitchen supplies, etc. I think now is the time that we really need to be there for our SMC community."

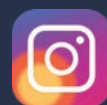


The managers have implemented new health and safety measures including reorganizing inventory to accommodate for social distancing, increasing cleaning and washing, as well as trialing new donation systems to keep everyone healthy and safe.

The campus Free Store is a space curated with second hand clothing, kitchenware, electronics, school and office supplies, decor, cleaning supplies, and more. All items are completely free and available to any member of the campus community.



For more info about donations and pickups, send a message to:



@smcfreestore



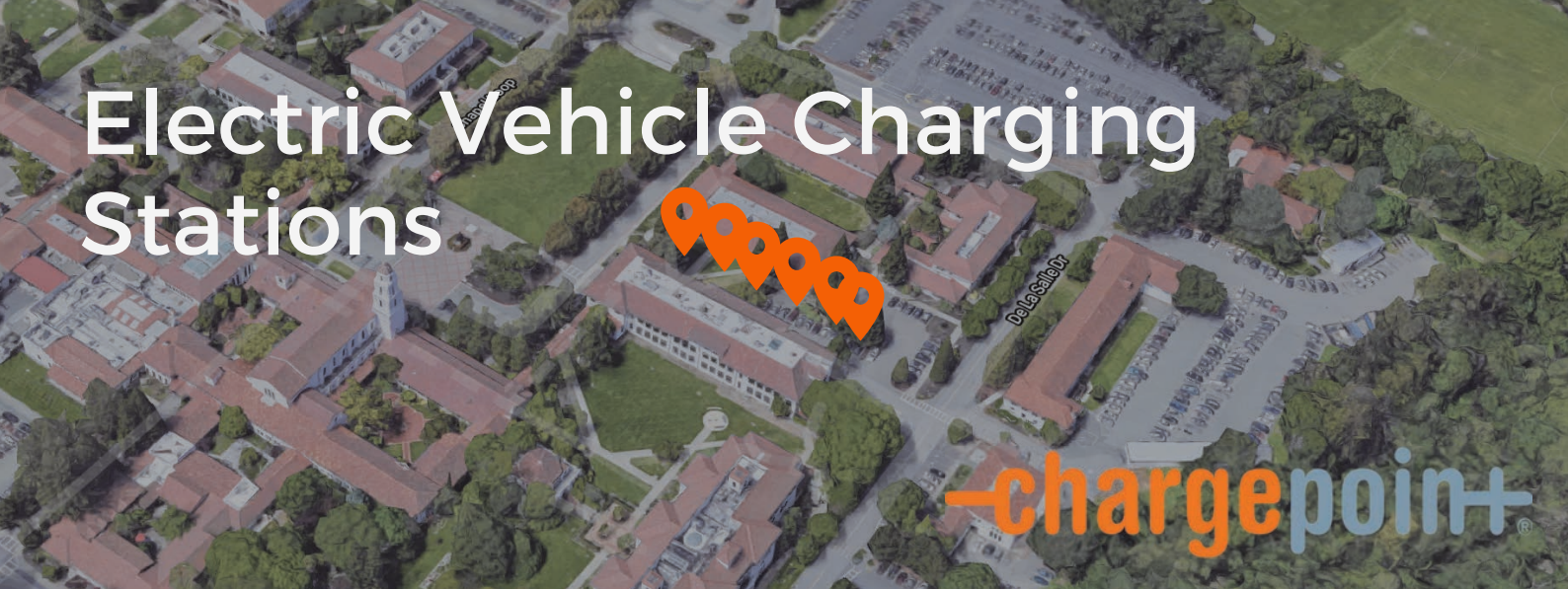
@smcfreestore



[smcsustainability@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:smcsustainability@stmarys-ca.edu)



# Electric Vehicle Charging Stations



Like most universities and cities, one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions comes from commuting. At Saint Mary's, faculty, staff and student commuting makes up 20.7% or 2,810 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e of our total emissions. The newly-instated Transportation Demand Management Program aims to increase alternative transport through incentivizing ridesharing, bus and BART. Many of our faculty, staff and students, and some of the SMC fleet, are increasingly making the transition to electric modes of transportation – a 2018 internal poll revealed over 50 electric vehicle (EV) users commuting to or living on campus. After six solar charging stations became non-operational in 2019, the Facilities Services, Transportation and Sustainability offices worked collaboratively to research and develop a plan to ensure EV drivers had reliable charging stations powered by clean energy.

This September, Saint Mary's was pleased to provide **11 Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations** to any campus user with valid parking permit. The charging stations include five dual-port and one single-port Level 2 ChargePoint 4000 Series chargers.

All new chargers are located in the Brother Jerome West Lot next to Galileo Hall. One of these 11 will be ADA accessible. The ChargePoint software provides EV Drivers with information on the available ports and charging status. The Office of Sustainability created an Electric Vehicle email group to facilitate communication about charging matters. If you are an EV driver and are not currently on the EV email group, you can request that your name be added by emailing [smcsustainability@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:smcsustainability@stmarys-ca.edu).





CELEBRATING

50

# Years of Earth Day **ONLINE**

Saint Mary's biggest sustainability event of the year – the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day – went entirely digital for the first time. After months of planning in-person events, speakers, an eco art show and a daylong festival on the chapel lawn, student leaders stepped up and pivoted to an all-online celebration of our common home. Leveraging new technology and social media platforms, the Campus Compact Community Fellows (next page) along with members of the Green Gaels Executive Team helped create an online platform for fellow students, staff and faculty to share how they were living sustainably while sheltering-in-place. The students also successfully hosted a keynote speaker, Willie Jackson of ReadySet, who discussed Allyship within the Environmental Movement. The event was co-sponsored by CCIE and the Intercultural Center. Later in the week, Professor Manisha Anantharaman hosted another guest speaker, C.N.E. Corbin, who engaged her audience on the history of the Environmental Justice movement. While we would have much preferred to celebrate in person, we were moved by the resilience and strength of our community and student leaders.



#### KEYNOTE

Willie Jackson

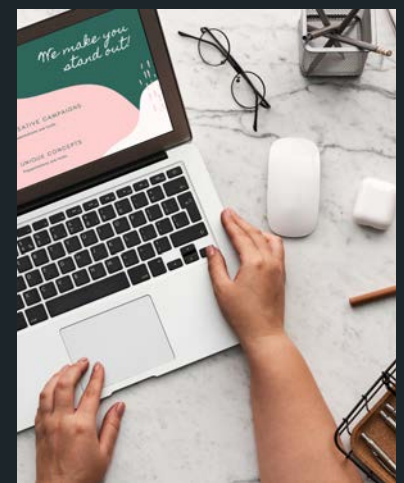
*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Allyship in the Environmental Movement*



#### GUEST SPEAKER

C.N.E. Corbin

*Environmental Justice: Past, Present & Future*



#### DIGITAL EARTH DAY

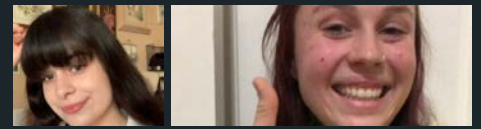
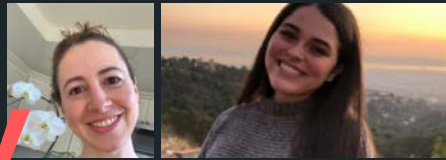
[www.flipgrid.com/digitalearthday](http://www.flipgrid.com/digitalearthday)

*In community, virtually*



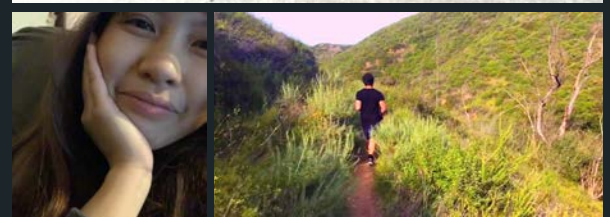
CELEBRATING  
**50**

# Years of Earth Day



The 2019 Campus Compact Community Engagement Fellows, pictured below, along with members of our Green Gaels Executive Team, helped create new ways of engaging the campus community virtually throughout Earth Month. One innovative means of staying connected was through a video-sharing platform used by fellow Gaels to share sustainability lifestyle choices, pictured right. To watch these videos visit:

[www.flipgrid.com/digitalearthday](http://www.flipgrid.com/digitalearthday)



## SAINT MARY'S CAMPUS COMPACT Community Engagement Fellows



**Campus Compact**  
California



## 7TH ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

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# QUESTIONS?

### CONTACT US

**WEBSITE:** [www.stmarys-ca.edu/sustainability](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/sustainability)

**EMAIL:** [smcsustainability@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:smcsustainability@stmarys-ca.edu)

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**FACEBOOK:** [@sustainable.smc](https://www.facebook.com/sustainable.smc)

### PREPARED BY

THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

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DECEMBER 2020